UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ General Assembly endorses OAU call for regional conference on Burundi refugees; urges parties there to continue to work for peace, security and democracy.

+ Secretary-General leaves London for Paris after meetings with British Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary.

+ UNPROFOR Commander meets with Bosnian President after Government troops fire on French peace-keepers clearing Mount Igman demilitarized zone; United Nations and NATO hold high-level talks at Headquarters.

+ United Nations estimates Rwandese refugee total at more than two million; number of internally displaced persons falls slightly to 1.8 million.

+ Basic features of effective system of accountability and responsibility to be established in United Nations by January, Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management says.

+ Expanding access to International Court of Justice could facilitate settlement of disputes between States, Court President tells Legal Committee.

+ States urge Disarmament and International Security Committee to give greater attention to destabilizing effects of illegal transfers of conventional weapons.

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The General Assembly today endorsed the Organization of African Unity (OAU) call for a regional conference for assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in the Great Lakes region of Burundi. In a resolution adopted without a vote, it also invited the competent bodies of the United Nations system to take part in organizing the conference.

The Assembly encouraged the new coalition Government of Burundi to continue to fight against warmongers and to disarm the militias and other extremist groups. It called on the parties concerned in the process of national reconciliation to continue efforts to re-establish peace, security

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and democracy. It also encouraged the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the OAU to continue their efforts to normalize the precarious situation in Burundi.

The Assembly also requested Member States, United Nations bodies and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to provide assistance for the reconstruction and revitalization of Burundi's economy. It also requested financial and technical assistance to strengthen the country's judicial system, to enable the authorities to bring to justice those resonsible for the attempted coup in October and for subsequent ethnic massacres.

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On the second day of his visit to London, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali met this afternoon with Prime Minister John Major. Among the topics they discussed were relations between the United Kingdom and the United Nations and matters pertaining to the Security Council, including developments in Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Somalia. He also had meetings with Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd and the Chairman of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Sir Michael Marshall.

The Secretary-General later left London for an official visit to Paris. He is scheduled to have meetings with President Mitterand, Prime Minister Balladur and other senior Government officials, as well as with United Nations representatives.

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French United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) troops helping to clear the Mount Igman demilitarized zone around Sarajevo were fired on yesterday by Bosnian Government troops using rocket-propelled grenades, small arms and two command-detonated mines. The peace-keepers, who returned fire, sustained no casualties, according to a United Nations spokesman.

The UNPROFOR Commander in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Lieutenant-General Michael Rose, later met with Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic to impress upon him the seriousness of the incident and the need to comply with the demilitarization agreement, the spokesman said. They agreed on joint measures for clearing the zone of Government troops.

Meanwhile, talks are underway in New York between senior United Nations and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) officials. The United Nations was represented by the Force Commander of UNPROFOR, General Bertrand de Lapresle, and the Under-Secretaries-General for Peace-keeping Operations and Political Affairs, Kofi Annan and Marrack Goulding.

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There are currently just over two million refugees from Rwanda in neighbouring countries, including 270,000 in Burundi, 546,000 in Tanzania, and more than 1.2 million in Zaire, according to the United Nations High

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Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) has put the number of internally displaced persons at around 1.8 million, down from 1.96 million in late September.

Meanwhile, the UNHCR has confirmed that 50 Rwandese refugees -- mostly Hutus -- have been killed by unknown assailants at Gittua in northern Burundi. They were among 2,000 refugees waiting to be transferred to a new site to be identified by the UNHCR and local authorities.

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The basic features of a transparent and effective system of accountability and responsibility will be established in the United Nations by 1 January 1995, according to Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management Joseph Connor. Presenting the Secretary-General's report on the subject to the Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary) yesterday, he said the Secretariat would have initiated such a system even if the Assembly had not mandated it in 1993.

The system will include the establishment of clear responsibility for programme delivery and a mechanism to ensure that programme managers are accountable for effectively managing human and financial resources, Mr. Connor noted. Performance evaluation for all officials and effective training in financial and management responsibilities will also be included.

"The aim is for a lean and flexible Organization. We want to achieve more with less and concentrate on programme implementation rather than on preparing reports", the Assistant Secretary-General for Conference Services and Support Systems, Benon Sevan, told the Committee. The system will include measures to make the Organization's legislative mandates clearer, he added.

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Access to the International Court of Justice is an important consideration in settling disputes between States by legal means, the President of the Court, Mohammed Bedjaoui, said yesterday. He made that comment to the Sixth Committee (Legal) as it began its consideration of the report of the International Law Commission. Far-reaching developments in international relations called for changes in the United Nations, and thought must be given to the role of the Court in that process, he continued. Some threats to peace fell outside State control and involved international organizations; it would thus be beneficial to expand their access to the Court.

Mr. Bedjaoui noted that certain innovations such as the access of the Secretary-General to the Court were under consideration. Granting such authorization would give the Secretary-General increased flexibility and help him in resolving certain political situations.

International Law Commission Chairman Vladlen Vereshchetin said the draft statute for an International Criminal Court would enhance the suppression and

prosecution of the most serious crimes. It would also complement national criminal justice systems. The Court would have jurisdiction over crimes under international law, such as genocide, crimes against humanity and crimes referred to in certain treaties. The draft statute included provisions to allay the fears of States that the Court might displace national jurisdiction or interfere with existing arrangements for international cooperation and judicial assistance.

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The First Committee (Disarmament and International Security) yesterday heard calls for greater attention to be given to the destabilizing effects of large caches or illegal transfers of conventional armaments. Zambia said the various hot-beds of conflict were being sustained by the use of conventional armaments. Africa had the lion's share of those conflicts, which were very costly and retarded economic development. Malta said there were many sources of instability in the Mediterranean region, citing dangerous levels of armaments and severe economic imbalances. The flow of arms, in terms of quantity as well as destructive potential, into the region was daunting.

The representative of Afghanistan expressed regret that Member States had not yet fully recognized the destructive impact that the availability of illegal arms could have. The most inhumane type of warfare had been tested in his country, including chemical and biological weapons. Fourteen years of war had left more than 1.5 million people dead and more than 2 million disabled, he said. The ugliest phenomenon was the existence of 10 million anti-personnel land-mines in the country. Much would be gained from any international measure adopted to restrict the development and use of anti-personnel weapons.

Thailand pointed out that conventional arms were still the main cause of human suffering. The Register of Conventional Arms should be developed into a universal and comprehensive mechanism, which would cover all types and categories of arms, stockpiles, indigenous production and weapons undergoing research and development.

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